

In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 7, 11 and 13 and add new Claims 15-18 as indicated below. The status of all pending claims is as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A storage apparatus capable of using a storage medium having at least a first region for storing therein data and a second region for storing therein both use permission discrimination information indicative of permission of a predetermined access operation and use limit information with respect to said storage medium, comprising:

a reading unit for reading said use limit information from said second region of said storage medium prior to an access to said storage medium;

a collating unit for collating use permission discrimination information provided for a comparison purpose with said use permission discrimination information read out from said second region of said storage medium in the case that said use limit information indicates an access not-allowed condition; and

a writing unit for rewriting said use limit information on said second region into such information indicative of an access allowed condition when it is confirmed by the collation that the former use permission discrimination information coincides with the latter use permission discrimination information read out from the second region.

2. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein:
said writing unit rewrites said use limit information into such information
indicative of an access not-allowed condition when the use of said storage medium is ended.

3. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein:
said use limit information is information used to define the number of times
used.

4. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein:
in the case that said use limit information indicates an access allowed
condition, said storage apparatus permits a predetermined access to said storage medium.

5. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein:
said use permission discrimination information contains such information for
discriminating at least one of access allowed conditions of recording and reproducing
operations with respect to a predetermined region of said first region.

6. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein further
comprising:

an access control unit for permitting an access operation based upon said use
permission discrimination information and said use limit information, which correspond to an

access instruction of said storage medium in the case that plural sets of said use permission discrimination information and said use limit information are set to said second region.

7. (Currently Amended) A storage apparatus capable of using a storage medium having at least a first region for storing therein data, and a second region for storing therein use permission discrimination information used to permit an access operation, comprising:

a reading unit for reading said use permission discrimination information from said second region of said storage medium;

a collating unit for collating use permission discrimination information provided for a comparison purpose with said use permission discrimination information read from said second region; and

a rewrite control unit for allowing to rewrite use limit number information recorded on said second region so as to correspond to said use permission discrimination information when it is confirmed by the collation that the former use permission discrimination information coincides with the latter use permission discrimination information read out from the second region, said use limit number information being used to limit the access to said storage medium.

8. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

when said use limit number information is invalidated, said rewrite control unit performs such a control that said use limit number information is rewritten into a practically very large value.

9. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein:

said use permission discrimination information contains such information for discriminating at least one of access allowed conditions of recording and reproducing operations with respect to a predetermined region of said first region.

10. (Original) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 7, further

comprising:

an access control unit for permitting an access operation based upon said use permission discrimination information and said use limit number information, which correspond to an access instruction of said storage medium in the case that plural sets of said use permission discrimination information and said use limit number information are set to said second region.

11. (Currently Amended) An access control method applicable to such

a storage apparatus capable of using a storage medium having at least a first region for storing therein data and a second region for storing therein both use permission

discrimination information indicative of permission of a predetermined access operation and use limit information with respect to said storage medium, said method comprising the steps of:

reading said use limit information from said second region of said storage medium prior to an access operation with respect to said storage medium;

collating use permission discrimination information provided for a comparison purpose with said use permission discrimination information read out from said second region of said storage medium in the case that said use limit information indicates an access not-allowed condition; and

rewriting said use limit information on said second region into such information indicative of an access allowed condition when it is confirmed by the collation that the former use permission discrimination information coincides with the latter use permission discrimination information read out from the second region.

12. (Original) An access control method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising:

a step of permitting an access operation based upon said use permission discrimination information and said use limit information, which correspond to an access instruction of said storage medium in the case that plural sets of said use permission discrimination information and said use limit information are set to said second region.

13. (Currently Amended) An access control method applicable to such a storage apparatus capable of using a storage medium having at least a first region for storing therein data, and a second region for storing therein use permission discrimination information used to permit an access operation, said method comprising the steps of:

reading said use permission discrimination information from said second region of said storage medium;

collating use permission discrimination information provided for a comparison purpose with said use permission discrimination information read from said second region; and

allowing to rewrite use limit number information recorded on said second region so as to correspond to said use permission discrimination information when it is confirmed by the collation that the former use permission discrimination information coincides with the latter use permission discrimination information read out from the second region, said use limit number information being used to limit the access to said storage medium.

14. (Original) An access control method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

a step of permitting an access operation based upon said use permission discrimination information and said use limit number information, which correspond to an access instruction of said storage medium in the case that plural sets of said use permission

discrimination information and said use limit number information are set to said second region.

15. (New) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said use limit information comprises at least one of a flag indicating use allowed/not allowed state information and a counter indicating use number of times limit information.

16. (New) A storage apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein said use limit number information comprises a counter.

17. (New) An access control method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said use limit information comprises at least one of a flag indicating use allowed/not allowed state information and a counter indicating use number of times limit information.

18. (New) An access control method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said use limit information comprises a counter.